

ORAL MEMOIRS

OF

D.R. BUSHNELL JR.

An interview conducted on

March 11, 2020

Interviewer: Laurie Dickmeyer

Angelo State University

West Texas Collection

“George Ricks Memorial WWII Oral History Archive”

LEGAL STATUS: The oral memoirs of D.R. Bushnell Jr. are unrestricted. The interview agreement was signed on March 11, 2020.

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DICKMEYER: This is Laurie Dickmeyer and it is Wednesday, March 11th, 2020. I'm in Johnson City speaking with D.R. Bushnell Jr. So, can you tell us a little bit about when and where you were born?

BUSHNELL: I was born in Johnson City on August 11th, 1925 in a house that was on Avenue C and... I can't think of the... but it was on Avenue C here in Johnson City.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: And I don't know how long we lived there but after I was born we moved out on a place... what they called... on quarter ranches. Out there right over on the other side of Flat Creek.

DICKMEYER: Okay.

BUSHNELL: My uh, I think it was... my mother inherited 246 acres of land. And we built, they built a house on it in 19 - I remember '31 because that's the year I started school. Uh, I lived at the time with my grandmother and my - in Johnson City. But we went... I attended Johnson City school.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: And we had to walk probably half a mile every day.

DICKMEYER: Okay. And, um, when and where did you enter the Navy? How did you get involved with that?

BUSHNELL: They drafted me.

DICKMEYER: [laughs] Oh okay, yeah.

BUSHNELL: I graduated from high school when I was eighteen. Of course I had a draft notice waiting in the mail for me.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: And I went to San Antonio for examine - to be examined and they passed me. And I don't know, I got about two weeks off and had to go back down there and they - I don't remember just what day but they assigned me to the Navy.

DICKMEYER: Yeah. And what year was this? Sorry.

BUSHNELL: Huh?

DICKMEYER: What year was this?

BUSHNELL: This was in '43.

DICKMEYER: Okay.

BUSHNELL: And then they got home - I got to come back home for a few... but I don't know how long then had to go back to San Antonio and then they put us on a troop train. Our train to go to San Diego.

DICKMEYER: Hmm.

BUSHNELL: Scared to death.

DICKMEYER: Yeah.

BUSHNELL: Let me tell you a little story.

DICKMEYER: Please.

BUSHNELL: I hadn't hardly ever been out of Johnson City in that eighteen years. Oh I might go to play basketball or something but as far as - we didn't have an automobile.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: And I got down there in San Antonio and they had a bunch of - a bunch of us ready to go to San Diego and this guy... one of the men yelled, "Bushnell!" Went over there and he handed me a list of people. He said, "You're in charge of this draft in San Diego." I said, "I don't know a thing about... doing anything like that." I said - He said, "Well just don't worry about it..." he said, "Try to get most of 'em on the train." But he said, "We'll get the rest of 'em up if they don't show up." Sure enough, there were a few of them that didn't show up but I had pretty good luck.

DICKMEYER: Mmm.

BUSHNELL: Went to San Diego, [cough] went through boot camp...

DICKMEYER: Right.

BUSHNELL: ...and, uh, after I got through boot camp I went to Santa Clemente. And there I went to radar training school.

DICKMEYER: You said you went to where again, San...?

BUSHNELL: San Clemente Island.

DICKMEYER: Oh, Clemente. Oh I've been there, yes.

BUSHNELL: Yeah. Went to radar school there. After I got out of radar early, sent me back to Balboa Park in San Diego, which was a receiving station. Until we had got assigned to a ship. Then after we got assigned to the ship - it was, uh, what they called... well we called it a Kaiser coffin. It was made in Astoria, Oregon. So we got on the trip - the ship, uh, on the train. Went to Astoria. Well, went to Brimington first.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: Our ship wasn't ready, we stayed in Brimington a few weeks until our ship was ready to go. And then from Brimington we went to Astoria, Oregon. There we got on a ship. I'd say three-fourths of the ship - people - men on the ship was maybe my age.

DICKMEYER: Right.

BUSHNELL: And we sailed down to Long Beach, California. This was sometime in the early part of '44.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: We loaded up with planes and supplies headed for the South Pacific. We stopped in the Marshall Islands and got rid of some of the equipment and supplies. We land at Guadalcanal - which was still active down there and got rid of the rest of it. We came back to, uh, to Honolulu or somewhere about in there. And then when we came on back to John- to San Diego or Long Beach and got more planes and more supplies and...

DICKMEYER: So you said this is your first time out of Johnson City. What was it like to go to all these new places out in California and then the Pacific?

BUSHNELL: Well I was scared to death. [laughs]

DICKMEYER: [laughs]

BUSHNELL: You don't know how it is. You know, times were so much different then.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: But without a car or - you know, I probably - like I told some of 'em, I said, "I probably wasn't in the Marble Falls, which is 20 miles...

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: "...over two or three times."

DICKMEYER: Yeah.

BUSHNELL: Same with Fredericksburg.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: And we went to Blanco once in a while with somebody. I don't know really, I don't remember all of it but... my dad had a Model T when the Depression started.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: And I never will forget, he says, "You know," he said, "I'm gonna sell this thing." He said, "We can't afford the gas for it."

DICKMEYER: Right.

BUSHNELL: So we sold it and we went - we had saddled horses and we had a wagon and team and that's how we travelled. And I think about the time that going to school up here there was wagons, and buggies, and horses...

DICKMEYER: Yeah.

BUSHNELL: ...like there are cars today parked up there. But, uh, it was all just scary. I was scared when I got outside. I mean, I didn't know what to think when, you know, I got on that ship. Never been on a - never even thought about a ship. 'Course they told us that - some of those old timers said, "Well," he says, "it's not much of a ship." He says, "it's no Kaiser coffin." It was a cargo ship with a flat - with a flat deck and a...

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: ...a hangar deck made into an aircraft carrier. That's really what it was.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: But anyway, we - we made several trips back and forth to the South Pacific hauling supplies. And back then, well, we got down to the - we crossed the equator.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: I wish I could find that certificate.

DAVID BUSHNELL: You've got your book open.

BUSHNELL: It's, uh, well not there but it's... going across the equator.

DICKMEYER: Yeah.

BUSHNELL: And of course when you cross the equator you got initiated. From a Pollywog to a...

DICKMEYER: [laughs]

BUSHNELL: ...what was that other one, what to call it... but anyway, well, you get initiated.

DICKMEYER: Hmm.

BUSHNELL: I got a certificate - it's 8 by 10 I guess - somewhere but I can't find it. Well we spent a lot of time down in the South Pacific.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: Furthest I'd ever know I was going to New Zealand. Uh, we went down there for supplies, [unclear]. And then back to a little isle in there called Ulysses. And there's where we get, uh, worked out of a lot. And, uh, then we got one day they called us, said we had to go in for repairs so instead of sending us in they sent us to Guam.

DICKMEYER: Hmm.

BUSHNELL: There's where we - they put us there for about two or three weeks. And we made a lot of those little hauls down there. I can't of all of 'em. But then after... oh, I'd say there sometime in '40... later part of '45 we got our squadron. And we moved on up to Okinawa.

DICKMEYER: Hmm.

BUSHNELL: Supplied support for the troops there on... And then we were - we were there for two or three weeks, not long. And they sent us back to San Diego for a complete overhaul. And, um, while we were in there the war was over.

DICKMEYER: Right.

BUSHNELL: And I was home on leave when it was over. So I went back to the ship and they had taken it out of dry dock but they put, um, bunk beds in the hangar deck.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: And we spent a couple of months going back and forth bringing troops home. And after that we got orders to go to Boston, Massachusetts. Through that Panama Canal. So, we went through the Panama Canal up through... we spent some time in Jacksonville, Florida.

DICKMEYER: Uh-huh.

BUSHNELL: Then we went on to Boston.

DICKMEYER: Right.

BUSHNELL: And I was sent - so we stayed in Boston for a while and then they decommissioned the ship and sent me to Fort Wallace, Texas, where I was discharged on the second day of April, 1946.

DICKMEYER: Wow. Okay, and while you were in the Navy, um, were you in the enlisted ranks, would you say? Or a non-commissioned officer?

BUSHNELL: I'll just talk about it. I was a second-class pay officer when it...

DICKMEYER: Okay.

BUSHNELL: ...at the end.

DICKMEYER: And if we can kind of go back and talk about, more about your experiences. Um, what would you say - and we'll kind of walk back through it again - what would you say your training was like? How would you describe how your training went?

BUSHNELL: I don't remember too much...

DICKMEYER: You don't remember too much about it? Yeah.

BUSHNELL: ...about it. But like I said, I didn't know anything - I didn't realize what was going on. But we stayed in San Clemente Island for probably six weeks.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm, yeah.

BUSHNELL: Radar training.

DICKMEYER: Yeah.

BUSHNELL: And then that was... never will forget when we went to - left San Diego there to go to San Clemente Island on a 1917 Destroyer.

DICKMEYER: Okay.

BUSHNELL: We got in a bad storm before we got out of there. And I was sick as I could be before we got outside the land. And, uh, we stayed over there about, probably around six weeks. But got back - well I stayed in Balboa and we stayed there for about, I imagine two months.

DICKMEYER: Hmm.

BUSHNELL: Something like that. And then nothing to do...

DICKMEYER: Yeah.

BUSHNELL: Really it's - in my mind - I didn't have any - we were never under a direct attack or anything...

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: ...out there. And which I'm fortunate. And we were fortunate.

DICKMEYER: Yeah.

BUSHNELL: Because we went from one end of the ocean to the other without a escort.

DICKMEYER: Okay, all by yourselves then.

BUSHNELL: That's why it scared us the first time. We left Long Beach, California...

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: ...with all these planes. Took off without an escort. And went down to the Marshall Islands then - never will forget, a airplane went down, a PBU. Or it was PBYs then I think, I don't know...

DICKMEYER: Hmm.

BUSHNELL: ...now. And then we had, uh, captain runs at night with the running lights on. And we were just... we were fortunate and lucky.

DICKMEYER: Mmm.

BUSHNELL: But I can't... you know, we - we'd get to go ashore and on some of those... some of those little atolls down there. And mainly Ulysses.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: And, uh, 'course they'd get there, send us over for our beer party.

DICKMEYER: Okay.

BUSHNELL: I didn't drink my beer. Give it to somebody else, throw it over anyway. And, uh, that's really different than the time on the ship. Well, I didn't get off very much because I was on it - they told me that I'd been on it for - when I left, like seven days being for two years.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm. Wow.

BUSHNELL: And that's long. And, uh, but we had an officer... well he was a commander then, in charge of our division. And, um, he didn't believe that us radar men should get over there and work on, go to work on work orders so we stayed aboard ship.

DICKMEYER: I see.

BUSHNELL: And I guess there's a lot that happened but I can't think of what.

DICKMEYER: Oh okay. How would you describe your - your day to day work as a radar man? How was that?

BUSHNELL: Well it was just - we were on so many hours.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: Unless we were under [unclear]. But we'd work on eight - eight hour shifts. And we were - somebody's on the DD all the time.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: Even in... a lot of it in port.

DICKMEYER: Mmm.

BUSHNELL: Because all that - all the country down in there was still - they weren't all - well just like when we went to Guadalcanal. They were still fighting in Guadalcanal.

DICKMEYER: Oh I see.

BUSHNELL: And I don't know how - the Marshall Islands, I don't know about them. And they have New Hebrides [unclear] not right. We went there but, you know, I don't remember too much about going there.

DICKMEYER: Sure.

BUSHNELL: 'Cause I stayed aboard ship.

DICKMEYER: So you must've spent a lot of time with the other men serving with you. Do you remember, uh, about your friends or your coworkers, what it was like?

BUSHNELL: Oh yeah I had some friends and... I had one, one man, his name was James Feuge. And he and I were drafted here and went to San Antonio at the same time. Got assigned to the same ship.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: And we spent all that time together of course. And I remember some of 'em and I remember a friend, one of 'em was... we called him Duke Manson.

DICKMEYER: Okay.

BUSHNELL: He'd smile when he'd see us. I believe he was 6' 6".

DICKMEYER: Wow.

BUSHNELL: He was too tall - was supposed to be too tall for the Navy, but they took him anyway.

DICKMEYER: Mm.

BUSHNELL: And he was a real good friend of mine. And there was a, a boy by the name of Rom. I remember him. And Thomasen. There was a Thomasen that I remember. My division officer's last name was Ladd.

DICKMEYER: Okay.

BUSHNELL: And I don't know - it's just... those were some of the men.

DICKMEYER: Yeah. Did you keep in touch with any of them afterwards?

BUSHNELL: Well, uh, Manson came by to see me one time but that's about all. Of course I knew James - he lived in Llano, James Feuge.

DICKMEYER: Where did he live again?

BUSHNELL: Llano.

DICKMEYER: Llano, oh of course, yeah.

DAVID BUSHNELL: It's "the Llano." [laughs]

DICKMEYER: The Llano? [laughs]

DAVID BUSHNELL: Feuge is F-E-U-G-E.

DICKMEYER: Oh could you say that one more time?

DAVID BUSHNELL: F-E-U...

DICKMEYER: F-E-U...

BUSHNELL: Huh?

DAVID BUSHNELL: Feuge or Feuge is F-E-U-G...

BUSHNELL: F-E-U-G-E I think.

DAVID BUSHNELL: That's what I think.

DICKMEYER: -E-U-G-E... Oh, I see, yeah.

BUSHNELL: Yeah I saw him. But those two was about the only ones I saw.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm. Right. But it must've been great to be there with James the whole time, right?

BUSHNELL: Yeah. And there was one man... well, his name was Hass.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

DAVID BUSHNELL: It's H-A-S-S.

BUSHNELL: And we were - we were all - a bunch of us were just young boys.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: And of course some of them were from the city and...

DICKMEYER: Yeah.

BUSHNELL: ...some of them were from the country. But all in all I had a pretty good, I guess, experience in the Navy.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: And not being under a direct attack. And one thing I got to come out of it with is a fungus infection in my ears.

DICKMEYER: Oh no. [laughs]

BUSHNELL: [laughs]

DAVID BUSHNELL: On top of that, it was incurable and he's basically got 5% hearing as a result of it.

DICKMEYER: Oh, geez.

BUSHNELL: And then they don't have any record of it.

DICKMEYER: Oh, really? Mmm.

BUSHNELL: But the nearest attack we were ever - uh, we were in Ulysses...

DICKMEYER: Right.

BUSHNELL: ...and, uh, we lent out that airplane and another ship took our place and somehow it got through the sub nets.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: Got in there and bombed it but we were just lucky always. We had...

DICKMEYER: And I know you said you spent most of your time on the ship, but when you did go onto some of these islands or go to New Zealand, do you remember much about meeting the local peoples there?

BUSHNELL: They didn't let me get out on...

DICKMEYER: No? Yeah.

BUSHNELL: They just sent a work party and...

DICKMEYER: [laughs] Yeah.

BUSHNELL: ...they didn't let me get out. And really most of 'em on these islands were US naval. So it really was the Navy that was there.

DICKMEYER: Yeah. So you were meeting other Americans mostly?

BUSHNELL: Yeah.

DICKMEYER: Yeah.

BUSHNELL: And most I saw was going through Panama.

DICKMEYER: Mmm.

BUSHNELL: We were just like - our ship liked about that much getting through.

DICKMEYER: Oh there was only about a foot?

BUSHNELL: That's, yeah...

DICKMEYER: Oh, wow.

BUSHNELL: We would scrape sides lots going through the canal.

DICKMEYER: Wow.

BUSHNELL: [laughs] But I wish I could tell you more but really I don't, you know, it's...

DICKMEYER: Yeah your experience was on the ship mostly...

BUSHNELL: Yeah, mmmm, yeah.

DICKMEYER: ...with your, with the other guys. Yeah.

DAVID BUSHNELL: He was telling me of those years and I always figured radar was so new that they weren't going to let those guys get out of sight.

DICKMEYER: Oh, I see. You think it's that? Yeah.

BUSHNELL: Yeah radar was real new at that time.

DICKMEYER: Mmm. So they were really careful with you guys who had been trained, and...

BUSHNELL: Well we just had an officer - this commander, he was over in England.

DICKMEYER: Mmmm.

BUSHNELL: And he worked with the Air Force and the naval and then he got to be, uh, let's see... he wasn't - he was the commander on the ship. And he looked out after the radar bunch. [laughs] And after he got pilots and everything, of course he was over there with them too. But we didn't have any - we, I'll tell ya, let me tell ya a little story about... we was in, like in the, um, California loaded up with planes...

DICKMEYER: Mmmm.

BUSHNELL: ...and then we'd have one plane on the catapult. And it was, believe most of the time, a parked torpedo plane, TBM or something. Then if we'd ever been under attack or anything, when they took off, they were on their own 'cause there wasn't any place for 'em.

DICKMEYER: Right.

BUSHNELL: We always had one torpedo plane on there and one - we had F4Fs...

DICKMEYER: Mmm.

BUSHNELL: ...which was wildcats planes. And we always had two of them that way they had one of each ready to go. In case we got under attack or anything.

DICKMEYER: Mmmm.

BUSHNELL: But then they were expendable 'cause they couldn't come back and land. [laughs]

DICKMEYER: Wow.

BUSHNELL: But, fortunately, we never were - had to do it.

DICKMEYER: Mmm. Mmm mmm mmm. Okay, so do you think that your service, while you were away in the Pacific Ocean, did that impact or influence your family at home?

BUSHNELL: It's bound to have but...

DICKMEYER: Yeah. But they were okay?

BUSHNELL: Yeah.

DICKMEYER: Yeah.

DAVID BUSHNELL: He had a brother who was in the Navy right behind him also.

DICKMEYER: Oh. Your brother was in the Navy too? Was he...

BUSHNELL: No, he was in the Air Force.

DAVID BUSHNELL: Oh was he Air Force? Okay, I'm sorry.

DICKMEYER: Oh was he Air Force? And he was younger than you?

BUSHNELL: Yeah.

DICKMEYER: Yeah, was he also drafted?

BUSHNELL: Uh-huh. Yeah evidently he was because he was six years younger.

DICKMEYER: I see.

BUSHNELL: But he never did leave the states.

DICKMEYER: Oh, it was too late? So...

BUSHNELL: The war was over.

DICKMEYER: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I see. Um, hm...

DAVID BUSHNELL: So the ship he was on was what they would classify as a jeep carrier.

DICKMEYER: Oh, okay.

DAVID BUSHNELL: It wasn't a frontline carrier...

DICKMEYER: Uh-huh.

DAVID BUSHNELL: ...and when he started to talk to me about it... I'm sorry, go ahead.

BUSHNELL: We called them a baby flat top.

DICKMEYER: Okay.

BUSHNELL: [laughs] It was only 300 feet long.

DICKMEYER: Oh, yeah.

DAVID BUSHNELL: So their main role was really to keep the frontline carriers on the frontline.

DICKMEYER: Right.

DAVID BUSHNELL: So they would ferry aircraft out.

DICKMEYER: Right, right, right.

DAVID BUSHNELL: Originally that was what their role was. It was pretty unusual that they got their own air wing assigned to 'em.

DICKMEYER: Mmm.

DAVID BUSHNELL: But like where a carrier would do 30 knots, they couldn't do 20, so...

BUSHNELL: 18 was about as fast as we could go.

DICKMEYER: Yeah, interesting.

DAVID BUSHNELL: So you take a short deck with a lower speed, it made it really hard to land on. In a sense they were ferrying aircraft to death.

DICKMEYER: So, just, they fly out off and then they're done, they don't go back to...

DAVID BUSHNELL: Well and they had - the deck was full of aircraft.

DICKMEYER: Yeah so you couldn't come back and land on it anyhow, that's what you're getting at here.

BUSHNELL: I never will forget we were in - somewhere in the Hawaii Islands down there and we worked with planes, learned - teaching them to land...

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: They never did though, they just hit the deck and keep going. And you'd be surprised at how many didn't make it.

DICKMEYER: Oh, dear. [laughs]

BUSHNELL: But that's the training they had, they just - they didn't land or anything we just got out there and did it. Hit the deck and keep going.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm. Yeah.

BUSHNELL: We did that for, I guess we did that for about 3 weeks or a month.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: We just did a little bit of everything. But mainly we were transport.

DICKMEYER: Right.

BUSHNELL: Taking from one... missed all the fighting.

DICKMEYER: Yeah, thankfully, it sounds like. Right? Yeah.

DAVID BUSHNELL: They couldn't run very fast if they got into it. [laughs]

DICKMEYER: [laughs] Yeah. Uh, do you have any other like vivid memories of your service? Things that we haven't touched on?

BUSHNELL: I'll tell ya, one time I was scared to death.

DICKMEYER: Yeah.

BUSHNELL: I don't know whether you remember they had a typhoon out there in 1945, [unclear].

DICKMEYER: Okay.

BUSHNELL: Off the Philippines. And we were not right in the middle but we were in it.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: And I never will forget that ship, the flat deck would dip under water, come up like that. And 'course we were all scared 'cause they told us that if we got - 'course the officers didn't

tell us this, but some of the older hands said, "We get off in a bad storm you think this thing'll just go to pieces." But it didn't.

DICKMEYER: It was okay, yeah.

BUSHNELL: [laughs] Yeah. So really the - and that's really the very worst storm in almost two years.

DICKMEYER: Yeah. Yeah, those typhoons can be pretty bad. Yeah.

BUSHNELL: But, you know, we furnished supplies all over there in the Philippines, Asia and everything but we didn't have - we didn't have our squadron 'til we got up to Okinawa.

DICKMEYER: Mmm. Mmm mmm mmm. Great. Mmm...

BUSHNELL: Yeah our orders were after we got over we would... Japan. But we never did.

DICKMEYER: Yeah.

BUSHNELL: The war was over.

DAVID BUSHNELL: How many planes would your...

BUSHNELL: Huh?

DAVID BUSHNELL: How many planes would your ship carry when you were transporting?

BUSHNELL: Tw- well, we had a hundred on there for the flight deck and the... hundred. But if we had our, with uh, our... it was 21 planes when we were supporting.

DICKMEYER: Mmm, mhmm.

BUSHNELL: Where the big ones had a hundred.

DICKMEYER: Yeah, yeah. And how many of you were on the ship normally?

BUSHNELL: Approximately a thousand.

DICKMEYER: Oh, okay. Quite a few people then, yeah.

BUSHNELL: 'Course when we would get the squadron aboard we'd - full squadron, we had more than that. But I think they said around 1,200 when the squadron was...

DICKMEYER: Yeah. Wow.

BUSHNELL: More than Johnson City.

DICKMEYER: More than Johnson City. [laughs] Yeah. Do you remember any other stories, David, that...

DAVID BUSHNELL: You once told me about - and I don't know if it was on board the ship or not - about the guy that had the scorpion that he kept in the matchbox? Do you remember that?

BUSHNELL: No, I don't remember that.

DAVID BUSHNELL: That he'd bet, people would ask what it was and he'd tell 'em it was the world's strongest bug?

DICKMEYER: [laughs]

DAVID BUSHNELL: He'd tell 'em if they could hold it down he'd give them \$5, if they couldn't, they'd give him \$5?

DICKMEYER: Oh. That sounds like a bad bet actually. [laughs]

DAVID BUSHNELL: [laughs]

BUSHNELL: 'Course life on the ship was - I mean, you know, overall it wasn't bad. We had good food...

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: ...and had three meals every day.

DICKMEYER: Yeah.

BUSHNELL: And then we had a dry place to stay there.

DICKMEYER: Yeah. And just work eight hours a day or...

BUSHNELL: Yeah, eight.

DICKMEYER: ...eight and then rest a bit and then maybe another shift? Yeah. Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: And I know the others had a lot worse of a time than I had. But I was fortunate.

DICKMEYER: Yeah. And were you able to keep in touch with your family back home? Were you writing them letters or?

BUSHNELL: I'd write 'em letters but then, you know, it'd be when I get a letter probably a month.

DICKMEYER: Right, right.

BUSHNELL: So they were old.

DICKMEYER: Right. Right, right.

DAVID BUSHNELL: Which back then wasn't that bad...

[doorbell interruption]

DICKMEYER: So you're saying it took about a month to get...

BUSHNELL: Yeah.

DICKMEYER: ...the letter from home? Yeah.

BUSHNELL: I think so.

DICKMEYER: Yeah. That's not too bad.

BUSHNELL: But, you know, there's... I know there's places that I can't remember.

DICKMEYER: Yeah, yeah. Or do you remember any other stories, David?

DAVID BUSHNELL: This is more than he's talked to me in my 62 years. [laughs]

DICKMEYER: Oh, okay. [laughs] That's fair, yeah. Okay, um, let me see... Uh, so let's talk a little bit about when you came back to Johnson City. I know we had talked about that a little bit before we started recording.

BUSHNELL: Well, I came back and I was gonna go to college and I went to work for Texas Wool and Mohair Growers Association and they were gonna send me to college there to Texas A&M.

DICKMEYER: Oh, okay.

BUSHNELL: Well wool and mohair bottom - prices fell. The man told me, he said, "Well we'll just wait 'til next year" and said, "we'll start up next year." But next year never got there.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: So I was working for, then I was working for a man by the name of M.C. Winters, in a hardware store.

DICKMEYER: Okay.

BUSHNELL: And I was working there and that's when I - oh I'll tell you, my wife and how we met.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: We, we, I never remem- she was six years younger than I am. But they had a fair and rodeo here in 1950... '51. And, 'course they had the fair queen, and anyway, her boyfriend, as she was gonna have it, backed out.

DICKMEYER: Oh.

BUSHNELL: He went to another - 'nother girl. And I had never been - met my wife, I mean I'd met her but - so, they decided they was gonna put her on a float. And they came - her boss's wife and sister came over to the hardware store wondering if I'd be her... go.

DICKMEYER: [laughs]

DAVID BUSHNELL: Her escort.

DICKMEYER: Wow.

BUSHNELL: Yeah.

DICKMEYER: [laughs]

BUSHNELL: But anyway, well, I said, "Yeah," I said. Anyway, well, we went out there and we - and she became, she was made queen.

DICKMEYER: Okay.

BUSHNELL: When they got to the master of ceremonies he said, "Well, Bushnell, kiss your queen." I'd never kissed her or anything. [laughs] That was first and that was in August. And then we got married in the eleventh day of April...

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: ...1952. And that year, came home for Christm- uh, came home. We were - after the - man down there said, "Well I sold the hardware store, traded it off with a man. Would you stay here and manage it?"

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: So anyway, I did. And I, uh, it wasn't but just a short time. He came to me one day and he said, "D.R., I'm about to move this hardware store to Earth, Texas..."

DICKMEYER: Mmm.

BUSHNELL: "...will you go out there and manage it?" I said, "Yeah," I said, "I guess I will." So anyway, I went on out there and I found out that this man that bought it, that he traded it for had three sons and that all three of 'em wanted to be managers.

DICKMEYER: Oh.

BUSHNELL: So, I went to work then I quit and went to work and Johnson and [unclear] in Muleshoe. He had appliances and hardware, an entire store. And I worked there for probably a year, and I had become friends with Will Seymore. And he, his brother was a superintendent for Union Compress and Warehouse. And he said, "D.R., why don't you go work for us?" and I said, "Well." So anyway, I did, I went to work for them.

DAVID BUSHNELL: It was a cotton compress and wheelhouse.

BUSHNELL: It was a cotton compress, is what it was.

DICKMEYER: Ookay.

BUSHNELL: And I worked there and we bought us a house and - and, in 1950 we built - we bought a house and then built one.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: And I hadn't got that built and hardly moved in it. My boss came up from Lubbock and he said, "D.R.," he said, "we're putting this plant in old Bovina. Would you go up there as superintendent?" So this was in '57. So, I went up there and I was superintendent there until '64. We moved back down to Johnson City, I was promised a job in the bank. I'd be a [cough] vice president.

DICKMEYER: Hmm.

BUSHNELL: But that never did happen.

DICKMEYER: Mmm.

BUSHNELL: [unclear]. So we put in a - Geneva would work for a part - attorney here and she wasn't satisfied so we put in a drive - a little drive-in restaurant.

DICKMEYER: Hmm.

BUSHNELL: That was in 1969. And, uh, we had it and in six months we had an explosion and lost it.

DICKMEYER: Oh, no.

BUSHNELL: We went ahead and built it back and we put a dining room on it. We ran that until '63, I guess. When did you get married?

DAVID BUSHNELL: '84.

BUSHNELL: I guess in '83 or 8 - I think it was '83. And we - and then we kept gifts and antiques there.

DICKMEYER: Mm.

DAVID BUSHNELL: They went from a 20 by 20 to a 7,000 square foot. Yeah.

DICKMEYER: That's impressive.

DAVID BUSHNELL: Yeah.

DICKMEYER: Yeah.

BUSHNELL: But anyway, well, then, uh, but went ahead and got our house built and everything paid off down there and made, then we remodeled it and Dennis put his restaurant down there.

DICKMEYER: Hmm.

BUSHNELL: It's Fox Barn. And we kept it and, uh, we didn't get rid of it 'til the 1970s... 19, uh, 2017. We had it up for sale for about 15 or 18 years and just cleared it out. And we kept our antiques and everything going. And then, well, I inherited 77 acres from my family.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: And we put a double-wide out there and moved out to our own place. Then I got tight for money.

DICKMEYER: Okay.

BUSHNELL: That building down there was, just, it drained us for - couldn't keep it going. Anyway, I said, "Well, I'm just throwing it out there." Anyway we sold this building, or building down there, in 19... 2017. And we'd been just living retired.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: My wife got sick and we had to put her in a nursing home. She lived - she passed away on September the 20th, 2... 19, 20?

DAVID BUSHNELL: It was last year. October the 20th.

BUSHNELL: Yeah.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: And I'm still kicking.

DICKMEYER: Yeah. [laughs]

BUSHNELL: Living by myself.

DICKMEYER: Yeah.

DAVID BUSHNELL: Dad, one thing you never talked to me about, when you came back here from, from the war...

BUSHNELL: Huh?

DAVID BUSHNELL: When you came back here from the war, how were you treated when you came back?

DICKMEYER: Mmm.

DAVID BUSHNELL: When you came back to Johnson City from the war?

BUSHNELL: I don't understand what you said.

DICKMEYER: Oh, so, when you came back from the war, how were you treated by people...

BUSHNELL: Oh, fine.

DICKMEYER: ...when you came back? Yeah?

BUSHNELL: They just liked...

DICKMEYER: Did you have any, I guess, other challenges when you got back because of your service? Or, you said it was fairly easy, right, in some ways?

BUSHNELL: Well I, you know, I had planned on going to college.

DICKMEYER: Yeah, it's the college.

BUSHNELL: That didn't work out. And, 'course we got married and...

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: And, but, everybody treated us fine.

DICKMEYER: Yeah?

DAVID BUSHNELL: They were proud of ya?

BUSHNELL: Yeah, I think so.

DICKMEYER: Yeah.

DAVID BUSHNELL: Did they act that way?

BUSHNELL: Well, they didn't act different anyway.

DAVID BUSHNELL/DICKMEYER: [laughs]

BUSHNELL: Let me put it that way. They still - I think they still [unclear].

DICKMEYER: Yeah and how about yourself? How did you feel about your service? Or how do you feel about your service now, looking back on your life?

BUSHNELL: Well, I don't know whether or not I'd have made any changes or not.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: 'Cause today everything would've been different, but back there and then...

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: ...I didn't know any better.

DICKMEYER: Right.

BUSHNELL: I knew that we had a hard life living on what we, we, most of the time we lived on what we could raise.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: And my mother went to, she finished high school. My dad went to the 8th grade. And he farmed [chuckles] he, uh, he farmed and then he had a ranch there. Never will forget in school I built - I built the tennis court.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: The school didn't have a tennis court. I love tennis. So we built a tennis court, and we had a bunch of kids always down there playing tennis. Now it's only adults. I started playing golf with a brute, druggist, a friend of mine here.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: And one day, this was before the war, one day I said, "Truman, you know," I said, "I believe I could build a golf course." So he said, "Well I'll furnish the money and the material." So, I went up in my dad's pasture and step, or stepped it off and made a 9 hole golf course.

DICKMEYER: Okay. [laughs]

BUSHNELL: We used sand for greens.

DICKMEYER: Yeah.

BUSHNELL: And we had a lot of fun out there, we, sometimes on Sunday we might have 20 people out there playing.

DICKMEYER: Nice.

BUSHNELL: Didn't charge anything.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: But after the war, it, nobody got - they quit there in the war...

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: ...and I came back and everything, cattle and, uh, everything messed it up.

DICKMEYER: Mm.

BUSHNELL: 'Course I was working too and, but then we moved to - moved to Earth and we were there for about a year. Less than a year.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: Moved to Muleshoe and we were there for a couple of years.

DICKMEYER: Yeah.

BUSHNELL: Went to Bovina, we was there for 11 years.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: Moved back.

DICKMEYER: Yeah. Johnson City must have changed a fair bit during that time, too, while you were gone.

BUSHNELL: Oh yeah, I, you know, it's a lot of changes.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: Even Johnson City had changed some.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: Highway changed. You know I can remember when I was a kid, you sit down there on Highway 281, 290. I sat down there and watched - waited - watched cars go by and there might be one every 30 minutes.

DICKMEYER: Yeah.

BUSHNELL: And I think back about when you'd see all the bicycles. And I didn't have a bicycle at the time but...

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: ...I got a chance to deliver papers...

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: ...while I was in high school. And so I dug up and found some parts on my bicycle. Maybe more. But then, 'course we'd go, we went fishing and he just had an apple box [unclear] and put all of our things in it and head off down the river. We'd go fishing. And nobody - 'cause nobody really had any cars. They had a car, some of them, but they wouldn't let us take 'em to the river.

DICKMEYER: Mmm.

BUSHNELL: But, and, [unclear] 'til I got back after the service I couldn't buy a car when I got out of the service. But this druggist I was tellin' you about, he - I signed up for a car.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: My uncle had - well he was a car dealer here, a Ford dealer. And I went over there and asked him, I said, "You know what I need, you know I signed up for a car." He looked at me, he says, "You'll be getting 76 - you'll get number 76." And he says, "You don't get it on right because you're kinfolks. You wait just like everybody else." Never will forget it was a four door sedan. He said, "You know what it's gonna cost you?" I said, "No." He said, "\$676."

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: So this druggist guy got a car. He had an old '32 Pontiac, straight-8. I bought that from him.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: I finally got me a '47 Chevrolet's Fleetline. And I bought it, and then '50 I bought a brand-new Powerglide.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: And then we got married and moved to Earth and we had a lot of - we didn't have many friends in our - this kind of plenished town.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: But we moved to Muleshoe and we had all kinds of friends over there. And then after, we moved to Bovina. We - and I never saw a town, a little small town... everybody was real nice to us.

DICKMEYER: Right.

BUSHNELL: And, uh, we were - the company had barely furnished that house. Paid all our utilities and everything. So we came back to Johnson City and I went to work in the bank and she went to work for E.D. Morrison. And we couldn't find - we found a house up there in town. And then I bought a house out on 290 here about 3 miles out. And this house - the attorney she's working for, he bought this house. And for people working at, for LBJ.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: After he - LBJ was our president then - well he wanted to get rid of it. He called me, he said, "Well, D.R." he said, "I wanna sell you that house up there." And he said, "You don't gotta pay anything down," said, "just pay off the note." He said, "That's, and it's got a \$10,000 note on it." [laughs]

DAVID BUSHNELL: Had six acres too, didn't it?

DICKMEYER: Wow.

BUSHNELL: Huh?

DAVID BUSHNELL: Didn't it have six acres?

BUSHNELL: No, it just had these two ones.

DAVID BUSHNELL: Oh this one?

BUSHNELL: Yeah.

DAVID BUSHNELL: I thought you were talking about the one out on 290.

BUSHNELL: No, this one. Lived out there, it had five or six acres.

DAVID BUSHNELL: Yeah this belonged to a guy that was working on presidential detail.

DICKMEYER: Wow.

BUSHNELL: But here he moved in where his boys could go to school and everything.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: And it was a nicer house. But anyway, we lived here for - added on and lived here. And put in a Burger Box and... life has been - it's been rough but it's been good.

DICKMEYER: Yeah. Sounds like it.

BUSHNELL: Got three good boys...

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: ...six great grandchildren.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: Or grandchildren.

DICKMEYER: Yes.

DAVID BUSHNELL: You're still waiting for that first great grandchild.

DICKMEYER: Oh. [laughs]

BUSHNELL: He tells my daughter every time he sees her, too.

DICKMEYER: Yeah. [laughs]

BUSHNELL: She's the only one married.

DICKMEYER: I see. So that's who's under pressure to have kids.

BUSHNELL: My oldest granddaughter is 34 and she lives - she's in Fort Collins, Colorado.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: And she said she's not gonna get married. Well the other one, Emily, well she got married. But Dana, she's 29, she's a nurse pract- I mean, she's a doctor.

DAVID BUSHNELL: Physical therapist.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: Yeah, physical therapist. And I've got two grand - I got a pair that's Dennis's twins and one of them's boy and one of them's girl, they're 16, so...

DICKMEYER: Wow.

BUSHNELL: ...don't look like I'm gonna have any great grandchildren unless Emily.

DICKMEYER: Yeah, I guess we'll see, right? [laughs]

BUSHNELL: [laughs]

DICKMEYER: Cool.

BUSHNELL: But I've got a good life, I've got a real good family. Couldn't ask for a better family.

DICKMEYER: Right. Well that's wonderful, really. Um...

BUSHNELL: Yeah. And I live here by myself but they can come at me.

DICKMEYER: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

BUSHNELL: And I've got a lot of good friends and two here that take care of me.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

DAVID BUSHNELL: He's outlasted a bunch of 'em.

DICKMEYER: Yeah.

DAVID BUSHNELL: That's the sad part, though, honestly.

DICKMEYER: Right, yeah, I know how that goes too, yeah. Yeah. Well do you have anything else you wanna share about your service, or your experience after that?

BUSHNELL: Not, you know, really. I - it's pretty, it's just a pretty normal...

DICKMEYER: Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

BUSHNELL: ...day to day thing.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm. And did you - or do you still have any items or objects or correspondence?

DAVID BUSHNELL: He's got some pictures.

DICKMEYER: Okay. Maybe we can take a look at that.

DAVID BUSHNELL: Sure.

DICKMEYER: Can we talk about them?

DAVID BUSHNELL: He's got some more somewhere but we don't know where they are.

DICKMEYER: Oh yeah, that's fair.

DAVID BUSHNELL: But there's just a few there. That top one is from the Neptune Society. You know, when you cross the equator, it's a big deal.

DICKMEYER: Oh. Yeah yeah yeah. I've read about this in, um, records dating back from like the 19th century even, yeah.

BUSHNELL: When you, when you cross the equator you get initiated there.

DICKMEYER: So that was a pretty memorable thing for you I'm sure, right? Did you have a celebration when you passed the equator, too?

BUSHNELL: Oh, yeah.

DICKMEYER: Yeah?

BUSHNELL: See here's the...

DAVID BUSHNELL: It'd be called hazing today. [laughs]

DICKMEYER: Ah, yeah I know. Oh, okay, so I see a guy say... called Davy Jones comes aboard, dressed up like a pirate? [laughs] And pre-initiation stuff. Oh yeah this guy's hanging down from a rope it looks like they're spraying some water on him or something?

DAVID BUSHNELL: Yeah.

DICKMEYER: Yeah.

BUSHNELL: And they go... here's court.

DICKMEYER: Yeah. Looking for Davy Jones. Okay so they have some binoculars made out of toilet paper?

BUSHNELL: Yep.

DICKMEYER: Okay. [laughs]

BUSHNELL: They were looking for him.

DICKMEYER: [laughs]

BUSHNELL: They were looking for him to come on.

DICKMEYER: Right. Right, right, right. What are they holding there, in their hands?

BUSHNELL: I don't know.

DICKMEYER: I'm not sure, either. Some lanterns, maybe, I'm not sure.

BUSHNELL: Yeah. I don't know. Was that on our base? There's [unclear].

DICKMEYER: Ookay. So we see Captain Neal. Do you remember Captain Neal at all?

BUSHNELL: Oh yeah, mmmm.

DICKMEYER: Yeah? What was he like?

BUSHNELL: Yep.

DAVID BUSHNELL: She said, "What was he like?"

DICKMEYER: Oh yeah, what was he like? Captain Neal.

BUSHNELL: Well, I mean, he didn't have much to do with us but I knew him.

DICKMEYER: Yeah. You, when you saw him you knew him, right?

BUSHNELL: He was captain of the ship. I had more to do with the commander.

DICKMEYER: I see, yeah. So Captain Neal greets King Neptune the following day. And this 'King Neptune' guy has, uh, a trident, a really long beard on...

BUSHNELL: Yeah.

DICKMEYER: ...a crown. Yeah that's pretty neat.

BUSHNELL: And that's his beard. The royal family, it says.

DICKMEYER: Yeah.

BUSHNELL: [chuckles] And I have some more pictures, though.

DICKMEYER: Yeah, that's great. Yeah, sprayed chop by the royal doctor, what's that? Do you remember what they were doing there?

BUSHNELL: No tellin' what.

DICKMEYER: [laughs] No telling what, yeah.

BUSHNELL: Uh, something, they had to eat something they didn't like I think.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm. How did you like living on the ship?

BUSHNELL: Huh?

DICKMEYER: How did you like living on the ship?

BUSHNELL: It wasn't bad.

DICKMEYER: It was okay?

BUSHNELL: I was real sick the first time I got on one.

DICKMEYER: Yeah.

DAVID BUSHNELL: I was gonna say, you got so sick on that destroyer, did you ever get that sick again?

BUSHNELL: Uh-uh.

DICKMEYER: No, just the first time, huh?

BUSHNELL: See there's mine.

DICKMEYER: [laughs] Do you know that guy?

BUSHNELL: Huh?

DICKMEYER: Who is that?

BUSHNELL: That would be me.

DICKMEYER: Oh, that's you? Yeah, I could see it.

BUSHNELL: [laughs]

DICKMEYER: I can see it. So, what did they put on your head there?

BUSHNELL: I don't know.

DICKMEYER: You have some kind of gavel and then...

BUSHNELL: Yeah, we were the court, the court.

DICKMEYER: The court, the royal court. Yeah that's pretty funny.

BUSHNELL: We're all in the court.

DICKMEYER: That's neat.

BUSHNELL: And he's the - it says royal prol - polly - pollywog. We were all pollywogs until we got...

DICKMEYER: Right, right, right. That's pretty cool.

BUSHNELL: This is just this courtroom thing. There and then, I don't know what they had there, something.

DICKMEYER: Royal baby tickled by procedure. [laughs] Oh, goodness. It's really... it's interesting that they made a whole booklet out of all these pictures. When did they give this to you?

DAVID BUSHNELL: It's like evidence today, isn't it? [laughs]

DICKMEYER: I know, right?

BUSHNELL: This was made after everything.

DICKMEYER: It looks like a lot of fun.

BUSHNELL: It is. I mean...

DAVID BUSHNELL: Unless you're in the mid-ship. [laughs]

DICKMEYER: Yeah, yeah. Unless it's a little too harsh. Pollywogs and Neal's royal court. Yeah.

BUSHNELL: Yeah, had to push something in there with their...

DICKMEYER: With their heads or something? Yeah.

DAVID BUSHNELL: And that's a plank flight deck too. [laughs]

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: And they, I guess that was reviving the barber.

DICKMEYER: Oh, geez. So it looks like, um, you have people here who are from different backgrounds, right? Different races and stuff.

BUSHNELL: Oh, yeah.

DICKMEYER: Yeah?

BUSHNELL: Yeah.

DICKMEYER: How was it, you guys all working together? It was fine?

BUSHNELL: It was fine.

DICKMEYER: Yeah. Cool.

DAVID BUSHNELL: What was the first time - what was it like the first time you heard a Northern accent?

BUSHNELL: I, um, it - 'course it was different and it was hard to understand some of 'em.

DICKMEYER: Mmm. Where were they from that was hard to understand?

BUSHNELL: Well, not - maybe New York or something like that.

DICKMEYER: Mmm.

BUSHNELL: Yeah.

DICKMEYER: And was this - this was probably your first time meeting people from...

BUSHNELL: Yeah. Oh, yeah.

DICKMEYER: ...those parts of the country, yeah?

BUSHNELL: Yeah. But, uh... 'course, this was more about - they were...

DICKMEYER: Oh, geez. So, they have a guy here in the stockade...

BUSHNELL: Yeah.

DICKMEYER: ...getting his face smeared with something.

BUSHNELL: Yeah, uh-huh.

DICKMEYER: Do you know what that is?

BUSHNELL: I don't know.

DICKMEYER: I don't - I can't tell from the picture. Some kind of paste.

BUSHNELL: Yep.

DICKMEYER: Or mud or something.

BUSHNELL: Well there's some... there's something I don't...

DICKMEYER: The fatal plunge.

BUSHNELL: Yeah, they had...

DICKMEYER: Did anyone go into the water?

BUSHNELL: Yeah, uh-huh.

DICKMEYER: Yeah? Okay.

BUSHNELL: And then they had to be cleaned. They had to go through a - a chute there. And they - I think they had all the garbage and everything else they had put in there.

DICKMEYER: Oh yeah, so they have a - a chute that they go through and then they're getting sprayed with a hose there, as they come out. Do you recognize other folks in - in this booklet that we just went through?

BUSHNELL: Do what?

DICKMEYER: Did you recognize other people in the photos? When we just went through there?

BUSHNELL: No, I...

DICKMEYER: Any friends?

BUSHNELL: I don't know, I - they all, they all went through it, all of...

DICKMEYER: Yeah.

BUSHNELL: ...all of the pollywogs that had ever crossed the equator.

DICKMEYER: Yeah. That's pretty cool. Neat. And then, you have some photos here, too?

BUSHNELL: Yeah there's...

DAVID BUSHNELL: There's a couple.

DICKMEYER: Yeah.

BUSHNELL: I had a bunch, I don't know where I...

DICKMEYER: Okay. You're that guy right there at the - in the middle?

BUSHNELL: He's tall, the next one to him. That's that Manson that was tall.

DICKMEYER: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

DAVID BUSHNELL: I wish I'd thought about it, I do have a picture of him in his whites back - when he's back home on leave.

DICKMEYER: Right.

DAVID BUSHNELL: Skinny as a rail.

DICKMEYER: I'm sure, right?

DAVID BUSHNELL: Oh, yeah.

DICKMEYER: [laughs]

BUSHNELL: And that's the other one I was telling you about, that's Feuge.

DICKMEYER: Oh, alright.

BUSHNELL: Yeah, that's him right there.

DICKMEYER: That's Feuge right there. Okay.

DAVID BUSHNELL: And you're in there, too.

BUSHNELL: Yeah.

DICKMEYER: Yeah? And who are those three men in the middle?

BUSHNELL: Uh, they were our officers.

DICKMEYER: Yeah.

BUSHNELL: Uh, this was our division officer, Ladd. And this...

DAVID BUSHNELL: Were those all radar men?

BUSHNELL: Huh?

DAVID BUSHNELL: Were those all radar...

BUSHNELL: Yeah, this is our group of radars.

DAVID BUSHNELL: Okay.

DICKMEYER: Okay. So there were quite a few of you.

BUSHNELL: Yeah.

DICKMEYER: How many radar men would you have on board?

BUSHNELL: I don't remember.

DICKMEYER: Yeah, that's okay.

DAVID BUSHNELL: A few. [laughs]

DICKMEYER: Well, there's a good - there's a good number of you here I would say. At least...

BUSHNELL: 18 probably.

DICKMEYER: ...12 or so, maybe more, right? Yeah.

BUSHNELL: Uh yeah, we probably had 25.

DICKMEYER: 25?

BUSHNELL: Just roughly.

DICKMEYER: Yeah, roughly speaking. Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: We had, uh, three different radars. We had - had one for aircraft, one for ships, and...

DICKMEYER: Mhmm. One for ships? You said three and then...?

BUSHNELL: Yeah. You know you could get - one radar was used for surface analysis, like other ships.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: And then we had one, right, for planes.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: You could get to where you could pretty well count, tell how many planes were in a group.

DICKMEYER: Yeah.

BUSHNELL: And how far the ship away is.

DAVID BUSHNELL: What was the third one? Was it a different range or something, or?

DICKMEYER: Or maybe submarines?

BUSHNELL: I don't remember. I think it may have just been two... I feel like I can remember.

DICKMEYER: Mmm. Okay.

DAVID BUSHNELL: It was sonar for submarines.

DICKMEYER: Yeha. Oh of course, not radar. Yeah.

DAVID BUSHNELL: Did y'all have sonar or do you remember?

DICKMEYER: Mm-mm.

DAVID BUSHNELL: Yeah. Counted on the destroyers for that.

BUSHNELL: Yeah.

DICKMEYER: Yeah? Okay.

DAVID BUSHNELL: So when you were going unescorted, y'all were blind for anything below the surface, weren't you?

BUSHNELL: I know, yeah.

DICKMEYER: Mmm.

DAVID BUSHNELL: Would the radar pick up a periscope at that point? I know some of the later ones would.

DICKMEYER: Oh.

BUSHNELL: It'd have to be real close.

DICKMEYER: But you never ran into any subs or...

BUSHNELL: We were lucky.

DICKMEYER: ...other ships, you're saying?

BUSHNELL: We were fine.

DICKMEYER: Yeah.

DAVID BUSHNELL: It may have been better that you weren't escorted, you weren't as big a profile.

BUSHNELL: I know it. Mhmm. And we weren't that - now if we'd have been on a battleship, or cruiser, or big aircraft carrier, well we'd have had all kinds of escorts.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: Now when we got up into Okinawa and up in there, we had escorts.

DICKMEYER: Oh, I see.

BUSHNELL: We had destroyer escorts, usually.

DICKMEYER: Mhmm.

BUSHNELL: I can remember once, we got in a storm one time and that, one of those little destroyer escorts, DE, [unclear] on water and it, the front of it dropped like that.

DICKMEYER: Yeah, that'd be quite frightening. Of course.

BUSHNELL: That looks like it'd be rough.

DICKMEYER: Yeah.

BUSHNELL: But all in all, I mean, I can't - I had a pretty good, pretty good time.

DICKMEYER: Yeah. Yeah.

BUSHNELL: The only thing I've got is, to show from it, that's bad is I still have ear fungus and I can't hear.

DICKMEYER: Yeah. Yeah. And that, did that impact you straight after the war, too? Yeah?

BUSHNELL: Oh yeah, you can't hear.

DICKMEYER: Yeah.

DAVID BUSHNELL: It got progressively worse. But he's had hearing loss...

BUSHNELL: Well when I went, well I - I went to a specialist after I got back here. I had to declare a...

DICKMEYER: Yeah.

BUSHNELL: Then the doctor sent me to a specialist in Austin. And then he made me put a [unclear] in my ear, passed out.

DICKMEYER: Oh, wow.

BUSHNELL: And then when came to we start - we were talking, he said, "Well," he said, "I guess you know you've got a fungus infection in your ear." I said, "Yeah, doctor aboard ship told me that."

DICKMEYER: Mmm.

BUSHNELL: He said, "There's no cure for it."

DAVID BUSHNELL: First thing he said is, "You served in the South Pacific, didn't you?"

DICKMEYER: Oh is that - that's how you got it, then? Of course, yeah.

BUSHNELL: And he asked me, he said, "Were you in the service?" and I said, "Yeah, in the Navy." And he said, "you were in the South Pacific, weren't you?" I said, "I sure was." He said, "I've got quite a few of those from down there and all in the same shape."

DICKMEYER: So was that doctor here in Johnson City that you were seeing? Or somewhere else?

BUSHNELL: This was a specialist in - one in Johnson City, Jaspreen, was the man that sent me to a specialist.

DAVID BUSHNELL: We're - we've always been a one-doc town.

DICKMEYER: I see, yeah.

DAVID BUSHNELL: I remember growing up - finally, the doctor's doctor told him he had to move, it was gonna kill him.

DICKMEYER: Wow.

DAVID BUSHNELL: Ya know, can you imagine being the only doctor in town where everybody knows your phone number and where you live and - no pri- I mean?

DICKMEYER: Yeah you'd be awfully busy, yeah.

DAVID BUSHNELL: Well in the grocery store, "Hey, doc!"

DICKMEYER: "Take a look at this!"

DAVID BUSHNELL: [laughs]

DICKMEYER: Right? Yeah.

BUSHNELL: Yeah I had two doctors. I had doctor - you remember Doctor Marlboro?

DAVID BUSHNELL: I don't remember him.

BUSHNELL: He used to eat with us all the time. He...

DAVID BUSHNELL: Oh, yes! From San Antonio.

BUSHNELL: Yeah. He told me about - he told me the same thing as the other doctor, specialist. He said...

DAVID BUSHNELL: Yeah he was an EMT specialist. Oh he had a ranch up here.

BUSHNELL: He said, he said, "no cure for it."

DICKMEYER: Mhmm. Yep.

BUSHNELL: But, we don't have any record of it being - ever had it.

DAVID BUSHNELL: Well, we don't know that.

BUSHNELL: Well, no.

DAVID BUSHNELL: He's applied for disability.

DICKMEYER: I see.

DAVID BUSHNELL: He hadn't done much of anything until now. The first time it was denied.

DICKMEYER: Mmm.

DAVID BUSHNELL: And they did have a big records fire in St. Louis. Ya know, this is just fairly common knowledge when you start researching this sort of stuff.

DICKMEYER: Right.

DAVID BUSHNELL: Tons of records from WWII were lost.

DICKMEYER: Mmm.

DAVID BUSHNELL: We don't know if his were there or not. But they just sent him a letter back saying that they had...

BUSHNELL: Well...

DAVID BUSHNELL: ...made an error and he needs to get re-tested, so.

BUSHNELL: Have I helped you any?

DICKMEYER: Oh, loads, yes. [laughs]

BUSHNELL: [laughs]

DAVID BUSHNELL: So, Imma get ready to leave, I wanna talk to you about his family history, too.

DICKMEYER: Oh, yeah, that'd be great. Yeah. But I think that...

DAVID BUSHNELL: That's, we're here? [laughs] Okay.

DICKMEYER: ...that's about it. Okay so again, uh, we were talking to D.R. Bushnell Jr. and his son...

DAVID BUSHNELL: David.

DICKMEYER: ...David Bushnell. And it's March 11, 2020. We are in Johnson City, Texas.